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ABSTRACT

The Governor's Institutes of Vermont are summer programs for Vermont high school students with strong personal motivation and interest in Art, International Affairs, and Science and Technology. In summer of 1990, a new program, based on the concept that teachers teach better when they are learners as well as leaders and called the "Lead Learners" program, placed teachers, as students, in each of the three institutes so that they could learn to be more effective agents of change and could also bring to their home schools some of the strategies learned at the institutes. Proceedings of a Lead Learner conference on performance-based course design and assessment are summarized in this report. Articles by contributing participants include information on school restructuring, classroom strategies, Soviet-American student interaction, and the creative process. The articles also provide examples of three innovative schools and two successful projects. A scoring guide for oral presentations is included. (LMI)

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LEADING & LEARNING

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The GOVERNOR'S INSTITUTES of VERMONT

The Governor's Institutes of Vermont are summer programs for Vermont high school students with strong personal motivation and interest in Art, Science and Technology, and International Affairs. Students are chosen to study these subjects intensely with professionals, on the campuses of Vermont colleges.

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"Lead Learners at the Governor's Institutes", a teacher and school enhancement program, was made possible by a grant from the Josephine Bay Paul and C. Michael Paul Foundation.

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For eight summers the Governor's Institutes have offered highly motivated Vermont high school students challenging learning opportunities on college campuses: in Arts, International Affairs, and in Science and Technology. In the summer of 1990 a new program placed Vermont teachers, as students, in each of the Institutes. Most of these teachers came from schools that are involved in restructuring projects. Their goal as "Lead Learners" was to bring to their home instituttions some of the strategies learned through their participation in the ideal setting the Institutes offer.

In late June teams of teachers from five schools gathered for a three day conference on performance-based course designs and assessments. Following the Institutes the Lead Learners reassembled for two days to share impressions and make plans for the Fall. This report is the first product of their work.

About the Lead Learners and Authors

Carlene Bellamy is a Special Services teacher at Cabot School who is interested in using hands-on learning in video and radio production to develop creative and critical thinking skills in all students. She attended the Arts Institute.

David Book teaches Social Studies to students in grades 9 - 12 at Cabot School and has served on the statewide committee developing the Writing Portfolio Assessment project. He attended the Institute on International Affairs.

Bill Conley teaches multicultural awareness and training courses at the School for International Training and co-planned and led the Lead Learner project.

Marge des Groseilliers, as the Principal, is helping lead the Cabot School and community to restructure curriculum, staff development, and parent involvement.

Michael Dwyer, of Otter Valley Union High School, teaches English, American Studies, and History to 9th and 11th grade students. He attended the Institute on International Affairs.

David Gibson is the Executive Director of the Governor's Institutes of Vermont. He lives and works in Stowe, where he planned and prepared the 1990 Lead Learner program.

Patty Heather-Lea teaches 9-12 Mathematics at Champlain Union High School. She attended the Institute on International Affairs.

Geof Hewitt writes. He also helps others write. He is the Vermont Department of Education consultant in Writing and Secondary English, and co-planned and led the Lead Learner program.

Kristin Johnson, from Champlain Valley Union High School, is currently researching school and community partnerships and connections for academic programs.

Curtis Maine teaches Science at North Country Union High School. He attended the Science Institute.

Ken Martin starts innovative ideas and programs at Champlain Valley Union High School, where he teaches Biology. He attended the Science Institute

Jennifer McKay teaches Science at North Country Union High School and attended the Science Institute as a Lead Learner for a second year.

Helen Morrison teaches Sciences, Mathematics, and Drama at Cabot School, where she also serves on the Challenge Grant writing committee. She attended the Science Institute.

Jim Rigg teaches Art to grades 9-12 at Mt. Anthony Union High School. He attended the Arts Institute.

Jane Sarno, of Otter Valley Union High School, teaches English, American Studies, and a Writing Workshop to 9th and 11th grade students. She attended the Arts Institute.

John Wheeler teaches Mathematics to 9-12 grade students at Cabot School. He attended the Institute on International Affairs.

LEADING & LEARNING

A Portfolio of Change in Vermont Schools

SEPTEMBER 1990

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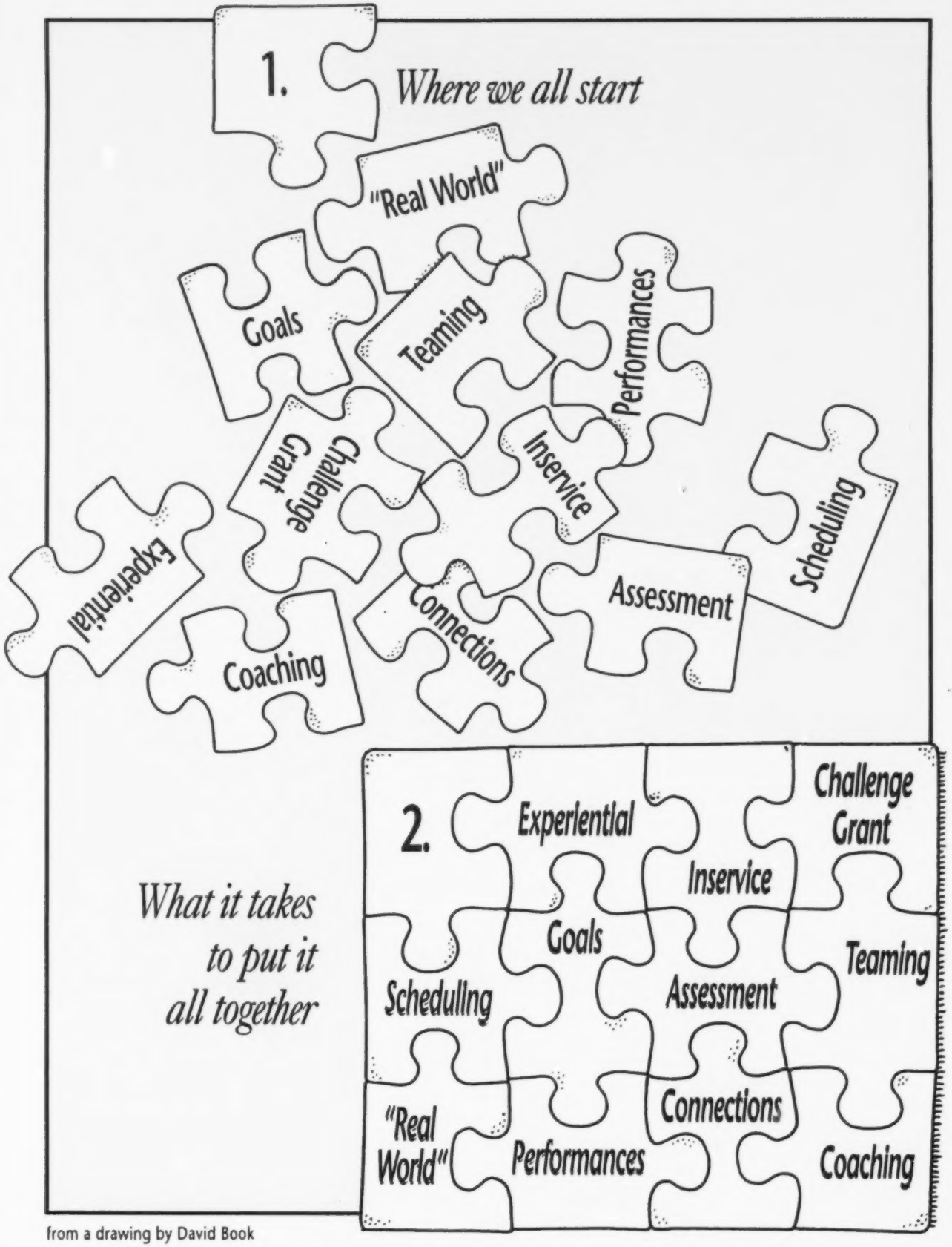

from a drawing by David Book

What is a "lead learner?"

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Teachers who are excited about their own personal and intellectual growth are learners, and we believe they are better teachers when they share their excitement with students. Teachers who work to make school structures honor learning first are leaders in reinventing schools. So a "Lead Learner" is a teacher in a new role in the classroom and in the school.

In the classroom, a teacher who is a learner first is a coach, helping students attain higher levels of performance. As one educational leader says of the new role for teachers "We're not sages on the stage. We're guides on the side." A key new methodology to enable teachers to move off the stage involves performance-based courses and assessments. That focus of this summer's conference is reflected in much of the writings by these leading teachers.

If an important new role for teachers is to share in the management of their schools, they need management training. The many political, financial, technical and philosophical strands of school restructuring are like separate pieces of a complex puzzle. One of this year's Lead Learners aptly symbolized the need for focusing resources on "Collegiality – Collaboration – Cooperation." Teachers need time and incentives, including compensation, to tackle the jig-saw.

These two themes – teachers as learners, and teachers as leaders – summarize the "Lead Learners at the Governor's Institutes" program.

In this collection of writing the 1990 Lead Learners offer multiple paths by which change is taking place in Vermont schools. Their schools occupy a variety of positions on the continuous spectrum of readiness for change. In some schools several years of preparation, faculty retreats, collegial planning, and strong and inspiring administrative involvement helped set the stage for the team to attend, learn and return with results. In other schools, the processes of change are waiting for an awareness to develop. Lead Learners from these schools are not unlike the countless isolated teachers that exist in every school, who strive to make their own classrooms better whether or not the rest of the school notices them.

The message to any potential Lead Learner is that operating inside one's own classroom is neccessary – because all change starts with individuals, and the least we can do is to change the things we can – but that, in itself, is not sufficient. Remaining isolated in one's own classroom will not bring about the kind and extent of changes needed in schools. We must take responsibility for leading as well as learning in our schools.

We hope that you will examine and find relevance in these ideas for reinventing schools for very high performance.

David Gibson

These two themes – teachers as learners, and teachers as leaders – summarize the "Lead Learners at the Governor's Institutes" program.

What to do until restructuring arrives

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I had a pretty good time in school this year, mostly better than any in the past, and I have my worst students to thank for it. You don't know them, but you might recognize the type.

"The homework is so boring," Jean and Kelly would whine, after coming in late, yelling out the door to friends, and asking to go to the bathroom. Not only would they be bereft of the boring assignment, but they would also lack books, pencils, or anything except their Walkmans.

This year Jean and Kelly were in a minority. Only two or three of the terminally do-nothing kids were in either of my Biology Level 2 classes. Most of their classmates seemed fairly content with the text units I had designed, which had a mix of written questions, activities, and labs. A few even said they liked the work in the book, because their last science class had been all labs.

By restructuring my own class I learned that I don't have to be an expert at everything if I let the kids become experts and help them to find ways of communicating their expertise.

In short, I could have comfortably ignored the dissatisfaction of Jean and Kelly, and no one would have been surprised or concerned.

But since our school is in the throes of restructuring. I thought this might be an opportunity to try a few small steps myself. I decided to try a live animal project with the kids. My own biological orientation is towards organisms in their own homes – I've never kept so much as a goldfish. But we spent a couple of days in the library researching the habitat needs of various animal species. The students asked me to bring in the biological supply catalogs so they could shop for the animals of their choice. They built habitats. I filled out PO's for animals and visited the pet shop on my lunch hour. When I went to the pet shop I talked with a former student who worked there. She taught me a lot about red-eared turtles, Siamese fighting fish, hamsters, and hermit crabs. She was grown up and had knowledge of her own – something she shared with the easy grace of an effective teacher. I felt we had shared a gesture and knew each other differently. She said I might have her brother next year, a boy who had carved "1990" into his hair for New Year's. I looked him up, introduced myself, and said that I had talked with his sister. Our first meeting was adult-to-adult, a style of relationship far too rare in school. I hope he is in my class next year.

When the animals arrived, the class changed. The kids had their projects and that is where they focused. My role was instantly different. I was relegated, or elevated, to being a resource. They relaxed, and started to accept me as another person who enjoyed watching their animals swim, creep, and gobble mealworms. It had always been a good class, but now it was better.

They drew pictures of their creatures. In a circle one day they showed their drawings and introduced their animals to the rest of the class. They shared their observations. Each day when they would arrive in class they would go first to their own habitats, tend to their animals, record notes, and then visit each of the other cages and bottles. They were usually all talking, and most of their talk was about their animals.

I share my room with other classes, and when the math class would come in they would go straight for the animals, also. Other teachers and administrators would wander in, and they beelined for the cages, too. The kids would explain to them what they had learned. In three weeks there were no incidents of abuse or sabotage.

After the project had ended and the animals were released or taken home (parental permission having been granted before ordering), I wasn't positive that we had fulfilled the curriculum demands, but I knew that even Jean and Kelly were happier and more positive. I started designing

another project idea while we returned to the text to finish out the last few "essential" chapters. Even that went easier, and when it was finished we launched our final work – independent group projects on subjects chosen by the kids. Some incubated chicken eggs. Others planted tomato seeds that had flown in space. Some did hydroponics. One group built a birdhouse, put it up by the pond, and videotaped the tree swallows that moved in. Others sifted the muddy pond bottom for organisms and established classroom aquaria. One boy who had terrible science experiences in middle school took advantage of the time to grow a whole window sill garden. "You'll never believe what is under the soil of my potato plant!", he exclaimed, pulling me over to see a brand new large potato beside the shriveled one he had planted. "My sunflower is going to open!" "You mean those seeds I planted will actually grow if I just water them?" "Can we try wildflower seeds?" "You'll never guess what bird I saw! A meadowlark! In the meadow!" "Can we go out on the roof with binoculars to observe the killdeer chicks?"

Every day at least some of the kids had fresh enthusiasm and fresh insights, often on things I had started to take for granted. After all, we had studied asexual reproduction in the book – how could it surprise Jim that a potato would produce new potatoes? I'd shown my flower slide show – how could it surprise and thrill Meghan that her seed had grown up to be a flower?

By the time the year ended and it was time for exams, each of my students had taught me some real thing. At its best, the project period had helped the students and I to be together in a natural way, and share the excitement of learning.

Of course the millennium had not arrived. I was disappointed with some of the final products, wondering if they justified five weeks of class. But I was excited too, by the different quality of relationship I had with my students, and by their enthusiasm for science and nature.

The reason I'm reporting all of this is because it is relevant to the restructuring process. Restructuring is a complex, lengthy, uncertain process. I can't predict when or if my school will pull together and take the plunge to make things change. But I suspect that it will happen sooner if each of us push ourselves a little further right now, to explore some new possibilities and take some new risks. I'm sure that I could do more things if I had a colleague in the room with me, or two-hour periods, or some other benefit of a restructured school. But restructuring begins at home. By restructuring my own class I learned that I don't have to be an expert at everything if I let the kids become experts and help them to find ways of communicating their expertise. I can be learning each day, instead of just teaching each day.

I expect to enjoy next year even more. And I have my worst students to thank for it.

Ken Martin

PHOTO BY ENRIQUE CORREDERO

"You'll never believe what is under the soil of my potato plant!"

Science and technology: "natural science and ecosystems"

❄ *Helen Morrison, Jennifer McKay, Curtis Maine, and Ken Martin attended the Institute on Science at the University of Vermont School of Natural Resources. Joining 58 selected Vermont students were 2 inner city students from Brooklyn, New York. The Institute staff was assembled and directed by Dr. George LaBar and Dr. Dale Bergdahl, to whom the credit goes for inventing the role of Lead Learners at a Governor's Institute.*

The structure and role of the Lead Learner at the Science Institute is very clear. Each Lead Learner is given a list of 15 students to be in charge of throughout the rotation of course experiences in the Institute. A Resident Assistant is also assigned to each group to help with dormitory life. The Lead Learner has a process role in the group – an interpreter role. The group experiences another person, the Institute staff member, as an instructor. Each group rotates through day long and half day minicourses in a variety of Natural Science topics. Groups stay together for the entire experience. With our groups of 15 students, we climbed Camel's Hump, collected samples, listened to lectures, wrote, and questioned. We learned as much as the kids. Our leading role would come out in the evenings, with discussions and playtime.

An incredible bonding with kids happens. Does everyone in all the Institutes fall apart at the end, having to say goodbye? We have never had this kind of experience with kids. How did we get close? We read their journals often, and guided them in their writing. There's such a different level of involvement in students' lives one gains by reading their journals. They wrote about everything: science, life!

Kids would say "This is the way learning should be." We were learners, and intermediaries. There was a big coming together. It was a real social experience. We had a full, tight schedule, but we were allowed flexibility within the groups...and ample time. Students put things together, discovering things about themselves as well as about science. It was great!

There's such a different level of involvement in students' lives one gains by reading their journals.

We are not sure which is more important now, learning about science, or learning about social and personal issues. It's important to tie the two together. The kids were definitely focussed on the social dimension. They were universally accepting of others. It's nice to have content, but it is so much more important to have enthusiasm and excitement.

One of the Institute teachers was an outstanding model of enthusiasm for personal challenges in learning and growth. The kids actually leaned toward her when she spoke. She loved them to death. The way she was made you want to learn how to be like her. She treated the kids as if they could all get it all, and they did.

The Institute has an exemplary structure for the experience. It keeps the kids busy and highly involved. It is thoroughly engaging, and tiring. We're pooped. Have we gushed enough?

Institute themes and the classroom

Although I attended the Governor's Institute on Science & Technology in 1989, going into 1990 from the perspective of school restructuring shed new light. The two weeks of the Institute are hectic and exhausting, but I found myself wondering how this kind of experience could be accomplished during the school year - thoughts which did not surface in 1989. After hearing from others who were involved in the Institutes and in school restructuring, a few themes of school change seem realistic and within reach, and these lead to a couple of concrete ideas for personal action in my own classroom and school.

Learning is most effective when there is an opportunity to schedule intense blocks of time. Increased time lends itself to discovering the interconnected nature of both the topic areas under study and the socialization needs and interests of students. The intensity of the Governor's Institutes is built on the idea that a learning community is also a social community. Top-down management style is counterproductive to active learning. The infrastructure of teacher and student should be a web. Everyone in the educational community has something to offer and something to gain. With only 45 minute blocks of time to work with, this idea of community gets lost in the scramble to beat the clock.

Seeing and experiencing students learning by teamwork, so prevalent in the Institutes, is also enlightening. Beyond formal schooling, very few tasks in life are performed completely alone. In the "real world" there are always various resources to tap; at least reference books, and usually other people, are available. Asking others for help in conventional schools may be considered cheating. Meanwhile, in the job market, the ability to work with people is considered an asset. That's quite a contradiction! Intimidation that is felt by students who are forced to work alone can be converted to excitement and enthusiasm when they are allowed to share the experience.

Beyond those two themes, I see one possible course of action within my own daily classroom, based on my experience in journal writing at the Institute. Encouraging writing by students, particularly in science courses, develops a critical skill: the ability to discover the interconnectedness of what happened in class yesterday to what is happening today. Seeing student journals at the Institute has given me a fuller realization that it is personal awareness of the learning process which rises above basic fact building and memorization. I hope that writing and sharing writing in my own classroom will also help students build on the social structure of learning within and across their classes.

Increased time lends itself to discovering the interconnected nature of both the topic areas under study and the socialization needs and interests of students

As far as the rest of the school is concerned, these immediate classroom goals may or may not have trend setting potential. But to put forward my interests in school change, I plan to send a letter inviting the superintendent, principal, and select board members to meet with my colleagues, the students who have attended the 1989 and 1990 Institutes, and me. We hope to convey our enthusiasm, and to begin to build the support and cooperation that is needed to form creative options in the educational community at North Country Union. Given our starting point as a school community, this in itself is an ambitious proposal.

Thanks to the Governor's Institutes and their supporters for the encouragement.

Jennifer McKay

The lesson

Isolated and under pressure, a teacher finds that sometimes what is learned ain't in the book.

On May 12, eighth grader Brian Franklin was stabbed at the Lewenberg Middle School in Mattapan. The incident occurred at 8:10 am. The wound was inflicted by a 12 inch blade below the left shoulder. Brian and another youth had allegedly had an altercation near the school the previous afternoon. The second youth is being sought. Brian was taken to Boston City Hospital where he is listed in serious condition.

I wonder what time has done to the memory. I sometimes misuse the memory, for effect. Things had changed. What were wonderful kids, lost themselves in the lack of structure. This was a face-off, really – a fight for territory, for manhood – the real guts of existence...over a girl, I think.

Homeroom – an unlit hall filled with dark, moving bodies... A strange buzzing excitement that I only noticed in my subconscious... A distinct crowd of kids moved into a room. I knew suddenly something was wrong. But I chickened out, pretended it was business as usual. "Ms. Morrison, Brian's been stabbed." Kevin flying out of the room. For myself, deep breath, what the hell, Kevin was gone. I wouldn't have to put my life on the line.

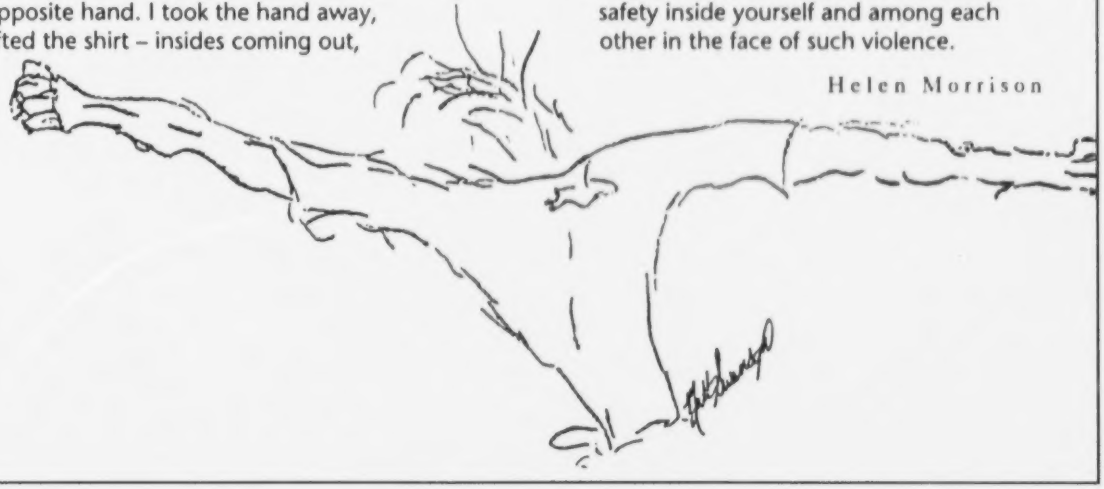
Brian leaning over the desk – tall, handsome, light-skinned, holding his side with the opposite hand. I took the hand away, lifted the shirt – insides coming out, way beyond what I expected, dark, liver-like, unfolding, exverting. Jesus!

Carry him to the nurse's office. Talk to him, keep talking, keep him here. Lay him down on the red plastic vinyl couch. Take off his shoes. Keep talking. Somebody call an ambulance. Spoon my body behind him – wound facing up, hand over it – gurgling, breath fading in and out. Where the hell is the ambulance? Keep talking, talk to me, stay here with me. Blood all over my black turtleneck, red-black blood shining, glistening, unable to hide.

In a letter to a friend about the above piece, Helen adds: I stopped where I did because it was the trauma and helplessness of the event that mattered...I remember I couldn't take the shirt off for a long time. I would touch the spot, even as it dried and hardened. I don't even think I washed it for a while. It was all somehow too momentous in my life – face to face with a very basic event.

P.S. There is one significant outcome from the rather primal event. The kids were terrified afterwards, terrified that in a place that was supposed to be safe (for many of them school was the only safe place) someone could maybe be killed. The teaching moment for myself and for them was to talk, to comfort, to hold, to try to figure out how to reestablish peace and safety inside yourself and among each other in the face of such violence.

Helen Morrison



International affairs: "the Soviet Union"

David Book, John Wheeler, Michael Dwyer, and Patty Heather-Lea attended the Institute on International Affairs at the School for International Training in Brattleboro. Joining the 45 selected Vermont students were 16 students and 5 adults from the Soviet Union. The Institute staff was assembled and led by Dr. John Ungerleider and Ange DiBenedetto.

Our experience was highlighted by connections to the real world, with the joining of the Soviet and American students as our object of study. It was fascinating to watch the dynamics of coming together of all the people involved. It was a wonderful experience.

Our content was the conversation with Soviet students. The importance of clear communications was evident, as was the need for simultaneous translation in both languages. In one session, we talked about stereotypes in small groups that were divided by nationality, asking ourselves to list what we thought the "other side" held as stereotypes of us! There were some surprises in the confirmation and debunking of notions – on both sides.

We experienced what it was like to be a student, and to be out of sync with the teaching style. For while we saw a good example of a team approach to teaching and some exemplary teaching, we also witnessed some bad modeling. For example, in the use of journals, the staff did not write with us. The model of writing we brought from the pre-Institute conference would have suggested more actual reading of work and sharing of personal thinking, not short report-outs. On the positive side, the Institute staff functioned well as a team, and showed us how a flexible, student-generated list of expectations can form a core for learning objectives. For example, students signed up to study under categories that they had helped generate, and those objectives were posted all week long and consulted regularly.

We feel that future Lead Learners can be more connected to planning and facilitating. We would have liked our expertise to have been tapped during the Institute, for while being a learner was "ok" there were times when we could have given feedback on the students to the Institute staff. We'd like to see a more structured interaction with Soviet teachers in the future. The logistics were great, even having international roommates! The food was exotic and the setting was appropriate.

It was well worth the investment of time to have been in this unique learning laboratory.

Our content was the conversation with Soviet students.

PHOTO BY ELIZABETH HANCOCK

An evaluation of "the Soviet Union"

❄ *Allen Gilbert, a humanities scholar and writer from Worcester, Vermont, conducted an independent evaluation of the Lead Learners program at the Institute on International Affairs for the Vermont Council on the Humanities.*

The goals of the program of the Institute on International Affairs were to explore and develop U.S./Soviet studies and Russian language teaching in Vermont high schools, and to develop teams of teachers to initiate curriculum changes at their schools. My observations in this evaluation were guided by two key questions: 1) Will the participants' experiences help change the way things are taught in Vermont schools? 2) Is there a systematic approach to how information on the Soviet Union is presented, and will teachers be able to use in their own classroom what they learn at the Institute?

Question 1 – Will Teaching Change?

The first question centers on "restructuring," a concept that was, for the teachers, the touchstone of the project. The concept is borrowed from business, which has had to restructure to meet competitive pressures from abroad.

A good definition of "restructuring" as applied to education is hard to come by. Some teachers at the sessions said it's nothing more than what used to be called "innovation," while others argued it means "reinventing" schools, or examining all the fundamentals of the American educational system and changing schools to meet new goals shared by community members.

The view which emerged at the Institute saw "restructuring" as interdisciplinary ("across the curriculum") teaching approaches that stress "performance-based learning." This means students use the tools of different disciplines (historical research, reflective writing, scientific experiment, and so forth) to explore a specific topic and then demonstrate to others what they have learned. The teacher's role in all this is to participate with students in their explorations, to cooperate with them rather than stand as an authority spewing forth knowledge.

The participants came to believe that "restructuring" will come about through innovations by individual teachers. The metaphor of ripples spreading over a large pond from a single pebble was often used. No one suggested drafting a new curriculum or forming a statewide group to explore alternative teaching methods. Instead, the emphasis was on the individual teacher and the role he or she can play in setting an example of rethinking the way material is presented to students and the way he or she interacts with students.

Whether the teachers' experiences will change the way things are taught in Vermont schools depends on whether the individual teachers do indeed create ripples in their schools and how far these ripples spread. It might be that the several teachers who came from "model" restructuring schools (those schools that have received challenge grants from the state Department of Education to "restructure") will indeed point the way they and other teachers can dramatically change the way students learn.

But the concept of "restructuring" seems so broad and fundamental that I suspect more than ripples will be needed. I couldn't help wondering if the participating teachers might not simply feel a great deal of frustration halfway through the winter when their experiences of this summer seem very distant.

In sum, I have trouble giving a definite "yes" to the first question I took with me to the sessions.

But another point needs to be made as a way of qualifying the answer. I feel there is a fundamental flaw in the application of "restructuring," a business concept, to education. American business has faced real pressure (i.e. reduced profits) to restructure; external market demands have essentially forced change. Without change, businesses face the prospect of going belly-up. There is an immediate, tangible need to change.

In education, the same external demand is missing. The "consumers," meaning parents and students – are not pounding on school doors for change. For the most part, the reformers come from within the educational establishment. True, there has also been pressure from business, but business has traditionally shied away from public policy debates on education and is perceived by many people as looking out for its own narrow interests rather than acting in the broader public interest. Whether business pressure can alone sustain educational reform is doubtful.

What's missing then is an external demand for change. Short of creating a "free-choice" educational marketplace, where demand would determine a new "supply" of schools and force change, educational reformers should be looking at ways to "empower" consumers so consumers force changes within the existing "supply" of schools.

The teachers participating in the Governor's Institutes hit on some good ideas to create forces for change. One was through the sharing of information. All the teachers said they feel isolated in their classrooms, and that they receive little feedback from colleagues or their communities. The participants often expressed a desire to "stay in touch" once the Institute ended. They all seemed ready, willing, and able to "restructure" their schools, but they implied there is currently nothing but rhetorical demand for change.

Imagine how parents and students feel. Most of them probably haven't the faintest idea of what "restructuring" or "performance-based learning" are! If teachers need support and encouragement to bring about change, the consumers in the system need to know what they can ask of their schools.

A number of suggestions on "keeping alive" the "fires" started at the Institute centered on establishing publications that would, essentially, create demand for change by keeping people informed. It seems logical that as broad a constituency as possible should be reached with any of these publications. "Market" forces generated by parents and students must be brought to bear on local school boards, administrators, and teachers if "restructuring" is to happen.

Here's how the sharing of information through publications could bring about change. The parent of a child in the Rochester Elementary School reads about children in the East Montpelier Elementary School studying local government and broadcast journalism by videotaping local selectmen's meetings and discussing the tapes in class. The parent wonders if the Rochester school is doing the same, finds out it isn't, and pushes local school board members and teachers to move from the school's traditional textbook-based curriculum to "hands-on" teaching techniques that cross several disciplines.

This approach would help create the same forces in educational restructuring that have existed in business restructuring.

PHOTO BY ELIZABETH HANCOCK

Teachers were concerned about how they can most effectively offer material to students so the students become active participants in learning rather than passive listeners.

Question 2 – Is the Information Systematic and Useful?

The Institute was structured to provide both information about specific topics (i.e. Soviet nationalities, current situation in USSR) as well as provide activities to encourage reflection, discussion, and presentations (i.e. journal writing, small group meetings, role-playing). There was a systematic approach to presentation of information, but there was no attempt to design a model Soviet studies curriculum. That was seen as something that could develop over time outside the Institute.

There is no doubt that the teachers learned things about presenting information that will be of great use to them in their classrooms. This aspect of their experience relates back to "restructuring." "Restructuring" seemed, for most of the teachers,

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tied strongly to how they bring information to their classrooms rather than what they actually present. There was little sense that adequate academic resources aren't currently available; instead, teachers were concerned about how they can most effectively offer material to students so the students become active participants in learning rather than passive listeners.

Among the many good ideas teachers gathered at the Institute was the value of student exchange programs. They watched Soviet and American students working together to design a plan to decollectivize Soviet agriculture. They helped students present a satiric historical review of the 20th century, and to draft a "Teenagers' Bill of Rights." They participated in activities focusing on how Soviet-American relations can be shaped in the future.

All these activities demanded specific knowledge. But students' acquiring knowledge was not the end goal of the exercises (as is often the case in classroom teaching). Rather, acquiring knowledge was a step toward the larger goal of using and manipulating knowledge to produce specific results. These results were then presented to the entire group – perfect examples of "performance-based learning," a key aspect of "restructuring" school curricula and testing.

The teachers will be able to use in their classrooms many of the techniques they learned at the Institute. Indeed, in the wrap-up session nearly all the teachers said they would use journals in their courses this Fall, and would encourage other teachers to do the same. This technique was used effectively at the "Lead Learner" sessions as well as at the Institute.

Summary

This program of "Lead Learners at the Governor's Institute on International Affairs" studying "The Soviet Union" was of significant benefit to the participating teachers. One hopes that, by extension, it will be of significant benefit to the teachers' schools, the children who attend them, and the larger community. This depends on the teachers' initiatives.

There is no doubt that something very important is happening in elementary and secondary education in Vermont. The humanities – in this case, social studies/international affairs – will, like other subjects, be affected. But while many new ideas are being tried in other subjects, innovation in the teaching of the humanities seems to be lagging. Social studies is a particular weak spot. Programs like the Governor's Institute can keep attention focused on the teaching of social studies in Vermont public schools, and should be supported and continued. At stake is whether the next generation of adults will have a strong foundation for lifelong learning in the humanities.

ON THE EVENING of the first day, Ange asked how things were going as she so often does. Someone replied that it felt awkward to express ideas in front of so many peers, but also added that it might feel different by the end of the week. The seventh day came quickly, but since time is measured in events, there may be no way to calculate the length! The important thing is that the events transformed peers into very good friends. We conversed, performed, and learned. The events provided opportunity for experimentation – trying new things – and making some of these things – these ideas – these events – a part of a new self! The self is constantly changing, growing, and being redefined. Just as our group was just born, so it is with us as individuals. We are born again each day to the possibility of getting one step closer to our destiny – discovering who we are meant to be.

John Wheeler

Bringing the real world into schools

I have heard a phrase emphatically uttered too many times in the past few weeks to ignore its implications for my teaching. The first time that I really heard it spoken was during our recent graduation exercise. One of our student speakers talked about the skills she had learned at Cabot School which would enable her to be successful in the "real world." That phrase struck a discordant note in my mind. "Wait a minute!" , I wanted to say to the student. "Am I not a part of the real world? Do all my efforts, hard work and energies take place in a fantasy world? What do you mean 'real world?'" I reasoned she must have meant "different" world or, at least, a more adult world!

However, since the opening sessions of this restructuring conference, I have been confronted with a different interpretation of that cliche. The frequently heard student questions "Why do I have to learn this?" and "When will I ever use this information?" or "How will knowing this benefit me in the future?" suddenly seem legitimate cries for help, more than mere complaints from bored and unmotivated students. Overcoming the perception of learning as "unreal" is a formidable task to be addressed in changing our schools for improved performance.

Several experiences during the Governor's Institute on International Affairs suggested solutions to this problem. My first revelation was the relevance of having Russian students, real flesh and blood citizens of the USSR, with real names and personalities, to learn from and with. What a new dimension this provided. This was truly a cross cultural experience: no contrivance or simulation necessary. How much more we might have explored and learned from a second week of sharing! I can no longer perceive the Soviets as enemy when I think of Ivanna or Tony or Andre. If this kind of reality works so well in the Institute model, the possibilities for the normal classroom must be considered. Not only might cross cultural activities be implemented, but also experiences involving persons from vocations that are related to units of study, i.e. a local representative to give a tour of the State House chamber and discuss his or her functions, or a member of the Civil War reenactment group to discuss the motivation and logistics of reliving Civil War battles. Many opportunities exist in our region to bring "real live" persons and experiences into the classroom or to take the students out to them.

Overcoming the perception of learning as "unreal" is a formidable task to be addressed in changing our schools for improved performance.

In the "real world," tasks, jobs, and roles are clearly delineated - what person would take a position without a job description? There are very specific and predetermined goals to accomplish. We are provided the tools to accomplish the tasks assigned and are usually made aware of the methods for evaluating individual performance.

Yet in the context of education we often act as purveyors of a secret – a mystery that can only be solved if the uninitiated successfully negotiate the rites of invitation. Frequently the "seekers" are not even aware of the "truth" for which they are striving. How many students can give an adequate description or definition of learning? I know from experience that often teachers are not fully aware of what they want students to learn or how they hope that learning will take place. We fire before we're ready, without taking aim. No wonder we often miss.

For me, the implication must be that I need a much clearer perspective of goals and objectives at the beginning of each course, each unit, even, yes, each lesson – how radical! That goal need not necessarily be announced at the beginning of each class, but most students would benefit from understanding what they hope to learn, how it is related to other things they have learned, and how that learning will be assessed. Eliot Wigginton of Foxfire fame stated in an interview in the article *On 25 Years of Foxfire: A conversation with Eliot Wigginton*, "The objectives are used to design the work so that what the students do is actually put

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those objectives to work in a real way." This makes a lot of sense to me. I greatly admired the oral history works that came regularly from Rabun Gap during the late 60's and early 70's, but never saw them as a model for effective experiential teaching. I have ordered Wigginton's book *Sometimes a Shining Moment* and hope to learn a great deal more about this fascinating model.

I am convinced that if we are brave enough to begin to bring the "real world" into our classrooms and begin the process of "demythologizing" the learning process, restructuring can take place and performance can be improved. I, for one, am committed to seeing it done in my own classes beginning with the Fall semester, 1990.

David Book

Most students would benefit from understanding what they hope to learn, how it is related to other things they have learned, and how that learning will be assessed.

Arts: "the creative process"

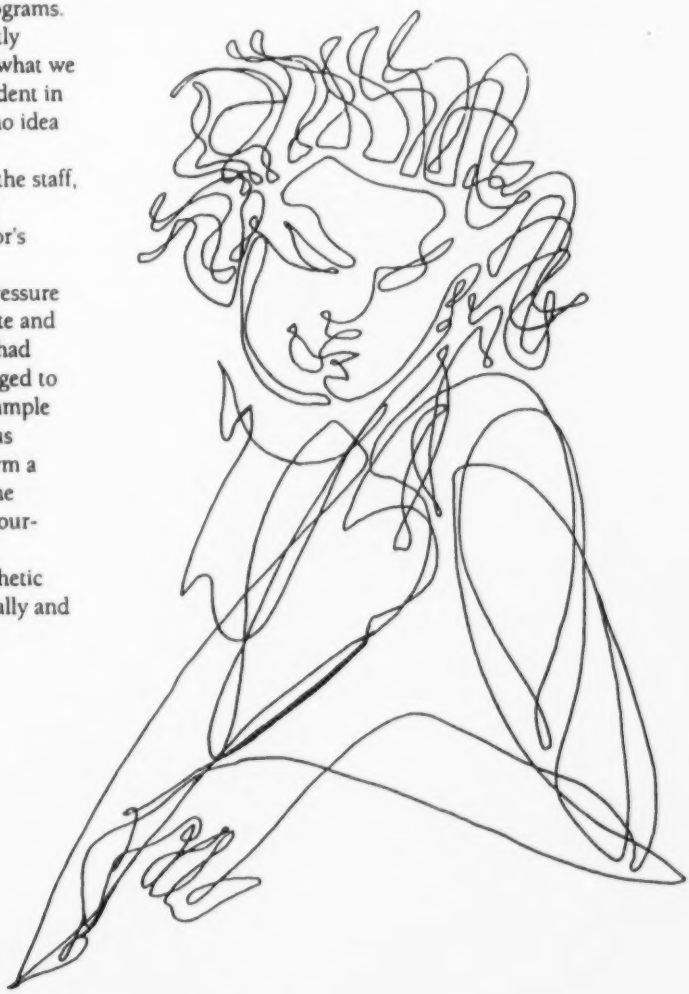
❁ *Carlene Bellamy, Jane Sarno, and Jim Rigg attended the Institute on the Arts at Johnson State College. Joining 130 selected Vermont students for the second week of the Institute were our Soviet guest students and adults. The Institute staff was assembled and directed by Donny Osman and Jessica Lutz.*

We were a bit lost in the crowd at the Arts Institute, which is considerably larger than the other two programs. Our roles as Lead Learners had us constantly educating people about who we were and what we were doing. We became students. One student in a dance class said at the end that she had no idea we were teachers. We liked that.

We learned directly from the artists on the staff, and we began to take "performance-based learning" seriously, because at the Governor's Institute on the Arts, everyone performs constantly. It felt safe to try things. The pressure to succeed didn't inhibit our desire to create and express ourselves. For example, one of us had never danced before, but we were encouraged to try things we had never done. We could sample things and look for ourselves. Another of us worked on several paintings which will form a core for personal work in the next year. The experience was the thing. Taking time for ourselves was great!

The whole Institute was a highly kinesthetic experience. Everyone was moving, personally and professionally. We witnessed remarkable peer relations through creative projects. We experienced ourselves as more advanced learners, but with the same struggles as students. And we shared that, some for the first time. We saw how a teacher could use an older learner like ourselves as a safe example for younger learners to experience classroom criticism and see an example of mature personal inquiry.

We gained from the artistic contact and we have been rejuvenated!



DRAWING BY GWEN SINGLEY

The following speech was delivered at the Governor's dinner at Johnson State College on July 2, 1990.

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I want to thank all of you for giving me this opportunity to learn with these energetic, creative young people. This is a rejuvenating experience in every sense of the word!

I spend my mornings, after the community chorus, in a writing workshop with Geof Hewitt and eleven writers. These talented students are inspiring and sometimes intimidating. However, I am growing as both a writer and a teacher of writing. Thanks to Geof and my classmates I am returning to my classroom with many new ideas and a few debunked myths. (According to Geof, run-ons and inconsistent tenses have their places.)

In the afternoon I am taking the African Dance class. As I have told several people, this is a body that has had trouble walking, much less dancing. But here, with Sandra Burton, I feel safe enough to take on this challenge. Creating a safe environment – where a person can explore new artistic fields – is one of the key features of the Governer's Institute on the Arts, and one I would like to foster in our restructured schools.

Next week I will be attending the School Development Institute where I will share ideas on performance based assessment versus competitive, individual learning; and, I hope, much of the energy that I have gained from this experience.

Thank you again.

Jane E. Sarno
Teacher at Otter Valley U.H.S.

Sermon...

Striding up to the podium, the speaker takes command of the stage. A hint of feedback from the microphone rises like a siren's call and falls. He clears his throat, and in a southern accent, begins speaking above the mumbling of the assembled teacher's union.

DON'T ASK FOR a raise! Go for the perks!

• *The crowd settles down immediately.*

"Do What You Love, The Money Will Follow" the book title says, and it couldn't be truer than for teachers today. The first perk I would demand is "time."

Schools do not provide, allow, or reward reflection on the part of teachers! In fairness, teachers don't often reward it in students either. Is it because it's so hard to evaluate, or is it simply a bad habit?

• *A few people shift nervously in the crowd.*

The reason I'd argue for "time" is not because it is essential to good staff relations, *curriculum development*, and thinking. No! "*They*" probably wouldn't go for those reasons *all by themselves*. The compelling practical reason is simply that it doesn't have to cost anything! Now there's an eye opener. If you can get them to believe that, the rest will come easier.

The "them" I'm talking about is, you know, those *other* people involved in schools, all of them; stakeholders, students, moms and dads, the people out of the loop, the superintendents and principals and people in the loop – all of whom stand to gain by what teachers can accomplish with time!

• *The speaker's voice cracks. He downs a small glass of water in one motion and wipes his face with his handkerchief.*

Promise them to use it well. Invite them to come into it fully to see the self-accountability of the profession. Promise them everything *and keep every promise you make*, but in the end, take "time."

As long as you're getting it, *get a lot of it*. I'd say that one hour of free time with co-curricular teachers for every half hour of course time would be about right. But I'd settle for *anything*, down to fifteen minutes per half hour of course time. Don't go lower! There's no need to *rearrange the deck chairs*. We need bailing out!

• *A voice from the crowd shouts.*

Explain the cost thing!

• *Feedback rings. The speaker smiles and takes another drink, smaller than before.*

They are not going to believe it just because we say it's good unto itself. We have to *show* them, and that means *involve* them.

OK. I was hasty. There is a cost, but it's not necessarily in terms of money. Remember, the beauty of this approach hits them in the pocketbook with a friendly pat. "No, keep your wallets in your pockets. We don't need money." They'll be listening. Guaranteed.

The *cost* is in terms of *letting go* of long held, and often repeated, *habits* of thinking, *patterns* of conduct, *levels of expectation*, and yes, even some of the values that underlie them.

Haw..oh!

• *The speaker jumps out from behind the podium, his fists hung jauntily at his ribs. He sweeps his right arm to the ceiling and looks up.*

The price has gone up considerably!

• *The speaker struts back to the microphone and in a quiet, calm voice, continues.*

But here again is the beauty of the demand. This *understandably high price* is payable in terms of, guess what, "time."

• *The crowd murmurs a sigh of relief. The speaker smiles in acknowledgment.*

So, here's the game plan. Whatever else restructuring can be, one of the compelling reasons it is routinely practiced in business is that it *saves money, increases efficiency or usefulness of the resources available, redirects the energy of the stakeholders, and improves the outcomes of activity*. So go for it! Be demanding.

Take power *slowly* and *methodically*. *Use politics!* Manage your superiors with the same respect you do your charges...and go for the perks.

David Gibson

A few ideas about restructuring

Vermont Education Commissioner Richard Mills relates a story about how, when he first arrived on the job, the state Board of Education Vice-Chairman Nicki Roth asked: Why can't our schools be more like Governor's Institutes? It is well known that the Institutes offer intense, challenging, hands-on learning experiences of a very high caliber, which the vast majority of students count as the most important learning event of their high school years. Why indeed shouldn't we strive for these elements of very high performance for all students in all schools?

Schools cannot duplicate the Institutes entirely because the Governor's programs are filled with highly motivated students, they are residential, and they are short. But schools can offer all students real choices and rewards for learning, they can build and sustain a student's sense of self-esteem and sense of belonging to a community, and they can restructure for more concentrated and exciting learning encounters in order to achieve higher levels of performance. The Lead Learners have something to say about restructuring from this perspective.

At the start of our final two days together, after the Lead Learners had a chance to tell each other what they had done in the Institutes, and what the Institutes had done for them, we built an agenda. Our idea was to ask for suggestions on how best to use our remaining time together. What was on their minds? What sorts of action were they planning in their schools? Did they have reentry anxieties about going back to their schools? What should we talk about? Were there any outstanding questions from the whole experience?

The response we got surprised us. "How can we get more students involved in experiences like the Governor's Institutes?" they asked. The teachers then created items for a far-reaching agenda on systemic school change. They offered specific answers to the State Board of Education's question of what a restructured school would have to look like to be more like a Governor's Institute.

The brainstorm of ideas from the Lead Learners can be grouped under four questions, which invite comparison with the Vermont Goals for Education:

1

What do competent, lifelong learners do?

"The lifetime mode of learning in ourselves is based on our experience and our interests." – Ken Martin

We don't just pull books off the shelves of life randomly, open them, and then decide to learn about what we lightly skim over. Yet the experience of school is often seemingly random and unconnected to students' personal lives and interests. Not that the curriculum must be a slave to a kind of hedonistic drive. The guiding role of teachers is too important for that to happen. But if we are not educating students in ways that connect to who they are, we are missing the first step in creating self-esteem, self-worth, and the development of self-directed life long learners.

So an important item on the agenda for change is for the curriculum – the daily activities of the students – to be engaging and experiential. A school that is restructured for very high performance has teachers whose daily activities guide students to derive learning from those engaging experiences through performance feedback. That means we need to agree what constitutes an exemplary performance, learn how to recognize one and give helpful evaluative information to students so they can improve their next performance.

Higher performance will come if we start performing publicly.

"Public performance takes expectations to a higher level. It has a self-transcendent quality, because it functions as a mirror as well as a window on the self." – Jim Rigg

The process works best when the goal is a public performance, because the teacher then becomes a coach, an ally who is helping the student prepare to represent both the teacher's coaching skills and the student's knowledge and abilities

before an outside audience. Student/teacher collaboration in performances should be a matter-of-course in restructured schools. Their relationship and mutual learning are then fueled by an outside force that motivates higher shared expectations.

"As teachers, we need to put ourselves up front as models of people who perform to learn."
– Helen Morrison

The old adage *"if you want to learn something, teach it"* acknowledges that preparing for an audience is a learning experience. We should give our students that opportunity many, many times. But more important, to reveal ourselves as learners and then to guide students in their preparation and rehearsals, we should be preparing ourselves for outside audiences for our own work. If we put ourselves on the line, we are authentic learners, and performance-based education will not become a game for kids to be watched by adults.

"Schools need to require students to perform, in real public forums – in print, speech, video, and audio productions – in order to be promoted and to graduate." – Michael Dwyer

"Schools should require faculty to perform too."
– Geof Hewitt

But we must not hinge everything on one performance, or one model of what constitutes an exemplary performance.

"We need to use composites in goal making and in setting up assessment programs." – Jim Rigg

We should use as many dimensions of observation and comment as possible and express things in a context for improvement i.e. using continuum scales to rate progress.

"A performance is not an end-piece."
– Carlene Bellamy

What is important is the cycle of performance – evaluation – planning – rehearsal. We need to stress that without a pre- and post-performance assessment, without the cycle of coaching for improvement, the performance simply becomes an entertainment piece. We are not talking about graduation by show-and-tell. We are talking about resumes, portfolios, and real intellectual and physical products of authentically engaged learners.

"A performance-based and hands-on approach is appropriate for gifted as well as not-so-gifted students. This kind of learning experience can be designed for everyone." – John Wheeler

2

What school structures are needed to help learners practice and perform?

"I would like to see large, intense, experiential blocks of time, time off, then on again; and there should be interdisciplinary processing of experience – for everybody in all subjects – that's the structure."
– Helen Morrison

Time and time again, a key element for restructured schools is time, and time again. Faculty want time to structure things flexibly and to conduct complex activities in a relaxed atmosphere. They want small groups of students for large blocks of time. They also want time to plan, especially to redraw plans daily from sketches they made earlier. And they want time to talk to each other to coordinate activities, share resources, and build collegiality. That means time has to be structured in every day as well as in the summer for post and pre-classroom debriefing and planning. It should go without saying, but needs to be said anyway, that teachers should be paid for this time.

"What I saw in the Institutes – and I'm not sure, can schools do this? – was students enthused about learning for its own sake, not afraid of being graded or critically evaluated. There was a sense of healthy fun in most activities, and good group cooperation, which was not forced, but was a natural outgrowth of the situation, the problem being solved, or the immediate needs facing the group." – Ken Martin

"Students felt safe to try things and experiment with ideas" – Jane Sarno

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"I'd like to see a school where students are taught how to ask for and accept group criticism as much as they are in the Institutes." – David Book

"I'd like to see study halls transformed into intellectual activities instead of the daily dead spots of isolation that they are now." – Carlene Bellamy

"Schools should have a community building experience every day." – Geof Hewitt

"Community building is safety building." – Helen Morrison

"Even though we get frustrated with the problem of 'leaving things out' of the curriculum, the process of learning – knowing what it is to learn – is as, or more, important than the data, to teach." – David Book

If we really mean this, we might as well take half of today's curriculum content and shelve it. Where are we going to get permission to do this? One hopeful sign was presented during the pre-Institute conference by Jean Hackett, who has been working on the Vermont Mathematics Portfolio project. She pointed out a list of items which the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics says should be dropped, but we can't wait for national groups to give us permission. We are going to have to get comfortable tackling these issues locally, in our communities and schools. Less is not necessarily more, unless we are ready to get the most out of our content by planning tasks that are more essential, engaging, intense, and rich, as well as feasible, given our resources.

What should effective teachers do?

"Use active student involvement, and variation as the prime principles of teaching." – Helen Morrison

Teachers should be learning managers, interpreters, friends, and co-learners with their students. In turn, school structures should value the quality of learning that takes place when a teacher is a learner because it reduces the boundary between student and teacher. When students write, teachers write. Effective teachers share their thinking, their creativity, their struggles in learning. And restructuring for them means getting things out of the way so they can do that.

"'It's OK not to succeed' is a message for kids in classes, otherwise they won't risk failing, or learning." – Jim Rigg

Teachers who act like coaches don't relish failures, but they use every one of them to teach something. And students who feel that today's performance is a platform for a better performance tomorrow, begin to develop inner criteria for performance excellence. There is also a need for an attitude change about the goals of some elements of the curriculum. For example, art in the curriculum doesn't need to be only for dedicated "makers of art." Our goal instead could be to focus on helping make all students articulate patrons of the arts.

"We need to acknowledge bonding as a classroom goal." – Curtis Maine

There is an important relationship between socialization and learning that we often miss in schools when we keep things under control. "Come to order boys and girls, quiet down" says it all. We hardly ever say "OK, lets talk to each other." We should fight isolation, not create it in our schools. Learning in high schools is too much a "you learn this" proposition. We need more group learning. Finally, teachers need to engage with students in activities not related to the curriculum i.e. that are not "school-like." Go bowling with the kids. Play volleyball. Build friendships.

"Interconnectedness is more important than the facts. Connectedness both within the topic area and other areas, and between the study area and the student's personal life." – Jennifer McKay

The parts of what is being learned should always be connected to, and lead to, a larger picture of the student's world view, thoughts, and feelings as well as the larger picture of the universe of knowledge. In the performance metaphor, the larger picture is the performance itself. What is

being learned is important and connected because it is about to be used, perhaps repeatedly, to make the best performances possible. Journals can be used highly effectively in all classrooms to help bring out these connections.

4

How can we get outside the school, and bring the outside in?

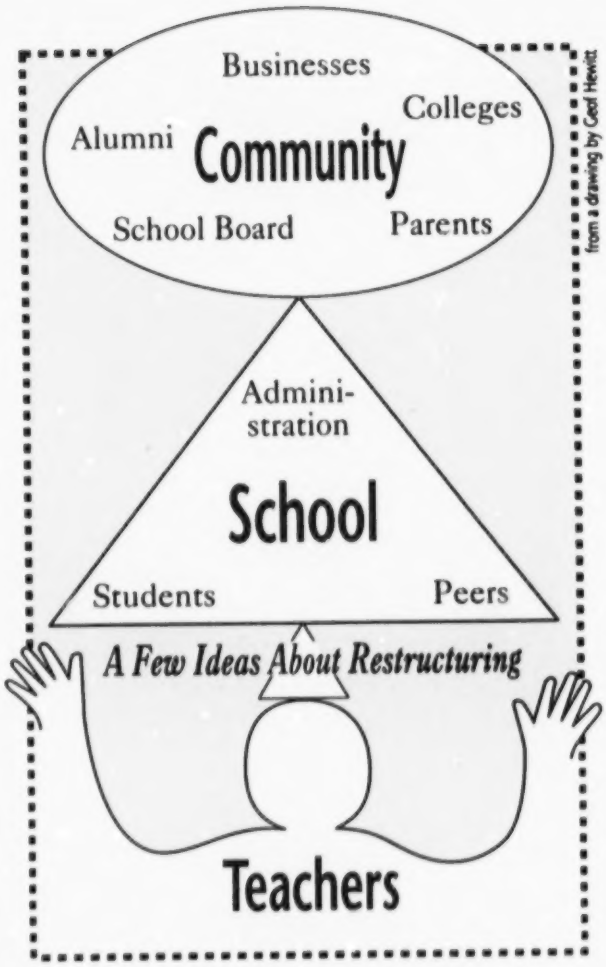
"There should be opportunities to integrate intense, outside Institute-like experiences in the regular classroom." – John Wheeler

Children get entrenched and defensive in the structures we create, so we need to take them outside that structure regularly, i.e. have school exchanges, use local environments, set up student networks. We should try to develop a school year equivalent to the Governor's Institutes, where teachers can come with their students.

"There should be frequent presentations by people from outside the school." – Geof Hewitt

Participation builds involvement and support. Using the school's local resources provides an opportunity for teachers to learn in front of their students, and builds communication channels with the community. Students can better connect school to life. Some can even meet their future employers, or their off-campus service-learning mentors.

"We need to communicate to the largest educational community possible what we've been talking about." – David Gibson



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Change from the bottom up. How do we balance things?

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The Restructured Famous Champions for

Change Lead Learner's School

(RFCFCLLS)

The Restructured Famous Champions for Change Lead Learner's School (RFCFCLLS) is a public, nonprofit, surplus-driven, K-12 institution for learners of all ages, nestled in the rolling hills of Johnson, Vermont. Its current student body consists of people ranging in age from four to fifty eight, with nearly eighty percent of the students at an "average" age for high school. Its faculty consists of people from all walks of life, with a ratio of 25 students to each faculty member. A principal and full-time assistant, two bus drivers and a building manager are the only paid administrative staff. Volunteer community involvement is strong, but student work projects maintain the school and its operations. Two criteria determine whether a student may enroll:

1) He or she must be a resident of the district;

2) He or she must exhibit curiosity. At the end of each month, the faculty gathers to review student and faculty progress. Any student or faculty member whose curiosity has not been actively exhibited within the past month is given a warning. If no improvement is noted the ensuing month, that person is dismissed.

The CFC School has a morning bell at 8 am. The school community gathers in the auditorium for announcements and to sing "Champs for Change," the school's tuneful alma mater. At approximately 8:15, a second bell, the last of the day, rings and students and faculty can be seen pouring from the building. Many are dressed in work clothes, and head for the school's commercial machine shop, print shop or oversized greenhouse to tend the community vegetable supply, which provides the nutritious lunch which another group of students and faculty will prepare in the school's spacious kitchen. A large group of students and faculty board a school bus and motor into downtown Johnson where they work in various capacities at volunteer positions or on construction or farming projects, for menial wages, which are turned over to the school, which in good years runs at a surplus. Still other students and faculty enter classrooms or the school's library for a morning of academic research.

At lunchtime the entire school body reconvenes for a leisurely meal, after which those students and faculty who pursued morning academics wash dishes, perform school maintenance chores or board the bus for town work, while those who had morning jobs enter the classrooms and library.

Your child, relative, neighbor or friend will thrive at the CFC School!

At the heart of our school is the library, whose spacious main floor shelves are lined with catalogued audio and videotapes, notebooks, photographs, drawings, sculptures and architectural models – all created by the school's students and faculty. Seminal reference books and periodicals, as well as a generous collection of fiction, plays, poetry and trade books, are housed on the second floor. Textbooks, along with curriculum guides, are retained in the library's new annex, which will receive a roof as soon as sufficient funds have been raised, or which may be converted to an open-air swimming pool.

Final exams are administered once each semester and consist of a completed research project, which must be documented and whose document will be housed on the library's main floor. Students and faculty members alike complete two such projects each year. One is a collaborative research project and one represents work primarily by the single individual. Where appropriate, a well-promoted, public summary of the project is presented as part of the exam. The first question addressed in every exam appears in place of the summary so often associated with scholarly pieces: "What I still need to learn about this subject."

Criteria for grading final exams include:

1) Did the examinee use appropriate research tools, exhausting all useful references?

2) Is the exam expressed clearly and in a way that the audience shares the excitement and journey of learning?

Graduation from the CFC School is contingent on a student's having demonstrated the ability to phrase a question, focus on potential resources and enter into appropriate research and experimentation, and communicate findings and remaining uncertainties. Any student older than twelve years may apply for graduation no more than once each year.

Academic classes provide the cornerstone of our learning philosophy. Students are assigned a teacher by grade and upon successful completion of two exams with that teacher, students move to the next grade. There is no requirement that a student wait until semester's end to complete the exam. Nor, so long as the student attempts two exams each year, is there any pressure to "pass" and enter the next grade.

Within the classroom, the teacher serves as a working resource, a model learner. Students are not given lectures, nor do faculty members demonstrate any skill but learning. Classes are often quiet, since the faculty member is not lecturing, but students and faculty members frequently exhibit their curiosity by asking each other questions for which they sincerely seek answers. More often than not, these questions involve next steps in a specific research project.

The faculty at our school act as resource persons. They do not have the answers, but are committed to helping students find the information they seek and to assisting them in developing the skills to interpret and present their findings. Faculty members are expected to make the curriculum, not as a formal document, but as the record of a line of inquiry.

No student is at risk at our school because dropping out is encouraged when/if a student's curiosity flags. Students are always welcome back after dropping out, provided they can demonstrate how and why their curiosity has returned. "Special Ed" students are welcome and are encouraged to stay with the program even when their curiosity flags.

Students who have dropped out of academic studies may choose to devote full time to community service or the school's maintenance/greenhouse/machine or printing shop programs.

Any member of the Johnson community is eligible to enroll. Classes run from 7 am to 10 pm, with students and their families tailoring schedules to meet their needs. Students are encouraged to act as teachers whenever they feel mastery over a subject or skill. Full-time faculty members, however, must have earned a high school diploma and spent at least four years outside of the school environment.

Geof Hewitt

Otter Valley Union School

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Otter Valley has approximately 700 students in grades 7-12 who come from 5 feeder schools. About 40% of its graduates go on to higher education. The school has approximately 56 full time faculty members.

Restructuring began in 1989 when Superintendent Bill Mathis extended an invitation to "dream and change." That spring, 15 faculty members and 2 community members served on a brainstorming committee which focused on economic education and business outreach. The committee also explored possible ties with the Community College of Vermont and wrote a grant which brought $10,000 for restructuring to the school in October. At that point, faculty involvement was minimal and many felt resentful and manipulated.

However, within the month, a faculty steering committee consisting of 5 teachers, 1 school board member, and the principal was formed on a volunteer basis. With this new teacher empowerment, restructuring gained momentum. In February 1990 Bob McCarthy, of the Coalition of Essential Schools, spoke at an in-service meeting. McCarthy outlined three implications for restructuring:

- public recognition for academic success,
- teachers as coaches, and
- change in assessment style.

Two representatives from the steering committee attended a school board meeting and were instrumental in designing a new job description for the principal and two associate principals

He also said, "Restructuring needs to start in the classroom."

In March, Principal Peter Hughes organized a Community Educational Summit. Al Mamary, Superintendent of Johnson City Schools, spoke to approximately 100 community members, faculty, students and administrators. From this summit the steering committee derived three strains:

1. Bring Al Mamary's message on school change to our community. Because his area is more disadvantaged than ours..."if they can do it, we can too."
2. Elicit both faculty and community belief statements
3. Edit the video tape of Mamary's presentation to show to 75% of the faculty who had not attended the summit. This last strategy did not work very well.

Two weeks later, in a half-day meeting, the faculty watched the video and worked in small discussion groups to revise a mission statement.

In May 1990 restructuring plans became much more concrete. On the first of the month several members of the steering committee attended a presentation on the Copernican Plan and a talk by Vermont Education Commissioner Richard Mills. One week later all members of the committee attended a day and a half retreat to plan the next moves. On the 18th of May, 2 committee members attended a program at Pioneer Valley High School in Massachusetts, a de-tracked school. Summaries of this program and the Copernican Plan were presented to the faculty on May 23. At this final meeting of the 1990 school year, John Clark from the University of Vermont Education Department helped us formalize our belief statements and conduct small group planning in the following areas:

- interdisciplinary studies
- scheduling
- community relations

At this point the majority of the faculty announced their readiness for change. However, at the end of the month a complication arose when the principal and associate principal announced that they were moving on to other jobs. Even with

this setback, faculty empowerment did not end. Two representatives from the steering committee attended a school board meeting and were instrumental in designing a new job description for the principal and two associate principals. It was agreed that the new principal would have to be open to restructuring and that the two associate principals would (and subsequently did) come from within the faculty to insure continuity.

A School Development Institute, organized through the University of Vermont, was held in July. Seventeen faculty members participated with other area schools. The Otter Valley team worked on a plan for 1991, incorporating change in instructional styles including interdisciplinary studies and heterogeneous grouping, revised schedules, revamped student assessment, and greater community involvement.

Michael Dwyer

Jane Sarno

Cabot School

28

Cabot is a small rural community in the foothills of central Vermont. Its public school reflects the values and spirit of a true community educational system. Residents of Cabot have chosen to provide for their 250 children the full span of pre-school, elementary, middle, and high school education within their own unique school system.

In 1986, under the leadership of a new principal, Cabot School embarked on a multi-year plan to improve the quality of education for all students. Because of the school's limited resources, we had to be innovative just to survive. Yet, our small size gives us the flexibility to be a successful laboratory for educational reform with high community involvement.

Key components of our plan were designed to improve student performance, community trust and pride in the school, faculty spirit, and to focus on collaborative problem solving and team building. To this end, several innovative programs were undertaken. Interdisciplinary studies for teachers and students in K-12 were designed and implemented over a four year period on a variety of topics. Faculty retreats were established which helped build a cooperative spirit and the foundation for successful collaborative planning among faculty members. The elementary school was reorganized around teaching and learning units and team teaching and planning were promoted. The middle school was totally reorganized and based on teams of teachers creating an integrated curriculum with flexible scheduling. Teacher support teams were established at the elementary, middle and high school levels and Team Leaders played a significant role in the decision making process of the school.

Our small size gives us the flexibility to be a successful laboratory for educational reform with high community involvement.

In more traditional ways, a school Mission Statement was written, Honor Roll standards were raised, students were recognized with winter and spring honor assemblies, parent attendance at all conferences was improved, more students decided to go on to higher education, more students were on the honor roll, attendance was improved, community communication was improved with monthly newsletters and a monthly Principal's Discussion Coffee, discipline problems were reduced, parents volunteered in the school in many ways, budgets started passing, student exchanges with other schools were encouraged, and the faculty wrote complete scope and sequence curricula for all subject areas K-12.

These successes gave Cabot recognition as a unique public school with a focus on continuing improvements and a record of innovative programs. The collaborative efforts of faculty, administration and school board to improve the quality of education provided the basis for undertaking major restructuring within the Cabot School. Further significant improvements in student performance soon required a higher level of innovative change. By the Fall of 1989, when the first Vermont Challenge Grants were announced, Cabot School was ready to build upon its successes and the already high level of commitment of its faculty, administration, parents and community. A strong foundation was in place and an optimistic spirit of "we can do it" was present.

Faculty Retreats

Beginning in 1988 with the endorsement of the Cabot School Board of Directors, specific staff development inservice days were transformed into faculty retreats. Taking place outside the school setting in area resorts during the first three days of the school year, these retreats gave the staff an opportunity to concentrate intensely on whole-group projects as well as to socialize. Our mission was to develop schoolwide themes and to plan K-12 interdisciplinary units such as International Cultures, Environmental Awareness, Constitutional/Bicentennial Celebration, Wellness, and Drama.

Teachers were invited to design curricula, and the concept of "teaming" was cultivated. Our principal coordinated the faculty's efforts at each level

– primary, elementary, middle, and high schools – with Team Leaders who continued to function with administrative capacities throughout the school year, setting agendas, conducting faculty meetings, and chairing special assistance teams.

Most important, the faculty retreats promoted bonding; the personal dynamic of the group was allowed to evolve organically and teacher relationships grew stronger. These experiences also helped orient new faculty members to life at Cabot School.

Restructuring at the Elementary and Middle School Levels

That year, the elementary and middle school faculty began working in teams to examine current teaching practice and learning outcomes, and to look at ways of raising performance standards to increase student achievement. As a result, several restructuring efforts were undertaken.

The elementary school reorganized the fragmented graded system into two units: the Primary Unit (K-3) and the Elementary Unit (4-6). Within these units teachers began to explore interdisciplinary approaches to teaching and to experiment with team teaching. The faculty's focus on the meaningfulness and "connectedness" of learning for students led to thematic programs and to lessons for multi-age groups.

From successful efforts with these fundamental concepts was born our hope to establish a better, alternative model for progression through the elementary school, based upon mastery of skills and on developmental readiness. We proposed to have teams of teachers stay for a few years with groups of students in multi-age classes, to create a nurturing, "pro-social" learning environment.

The two main obstacles to this direction, for which remedies have been proposed, are space requirements and team planning time. The school's Building Committee is considering facilities improvements and rebuilding, and the 1990-91 schedules will include team planning periods.

Other notable projects that have recently started in the elementary school include the addition of Drama and French, a program for parents to collaborate in hands-on science projects, a guidance office focus on self-esteem in the classrooms, and a Preschool program to accommodate all four year olds needing an extra boost during their early development years.

In 1989, the middle school faculty implemented a plan for restructuring the 7th and 8th grades in which teachers began coordinating in teams and working with heterogeneous groups. Each middle school faculty member served as a Teacher Advisor for a small group of students. Additionally, the middle school faculty formed two teams of teachers, the Core Team and the Arts Team. Interdisciplinary study themes were planned and implemented by each team and by the whole group. A study skills group developed for the purpose of supporting the academic program and French, continuing from the elementary level, became a required course.

It should be noted that daily and summer planning time, and faculty responsibility for curriculum design and budget planning contributed significantly to the success of the 1989-90 middle school program.

Daily and summer planning time, faculty responsibility for curriculum design and budget planning contributed significantly to the success

Both the elementary and the middle school levels have established ties with community resources and partnerships with parents through discussion groups, the use of parent-student-teacher contracts, and parent conferences.

Four Teacher Assistance Teams – one at each level for primary, elementary, middle, and high school – have been established to solve problems and provide assistance to all students with special academic, social, behavioral, psychological, physical, or medical needs. A second level of support comes from the Student Assistance Team, which serves both as a screen for Special Education referrals and as a council for reviewing and recording special cases and for developing plans of action.

A Learning Team, comprised of the Speech and Language Pathologist, Special Educator, and

Chapter One Teacher, works extensively with classroom teachers providing remedial instruction, support for teaching groups with diverse needs and abilities, and intervention strategies.

These innovative elements of restructuring at the elementary and middle school levels have helped create pressure on the high school, according to the school's grant proposal written in December 1990, " to substantially revise and restructure its curriculum and to raise its performance standards."

Drafting the First Challenge Grant

Because Cabot had fours years of restructuring experience, the school community welcomed the possibility of a state challenge grant in the Fall of 1990. Cabot was already taking educational risks. The challenge grant represented not only financial assistance, but definitive support from the state to dream, experiment, and implement changes on a large scale.

The challenge grant represented not only financial assistance, but definitive support from the state to dream, experiment, and implement changes on a large scale.

Our proposal drafting committee consisted of the chairperson of the school board, the principal, the superintendent, three parents who are active in business, a middle school math/science teacher, a high school math/science teacher, a fifth grade teacher, and a K-12 music teacher. The committee identified three distinct goals for the school's proposal:

1) an education that would promote the highest levels of performance attainable for all students to enable them to meet the needs and demands of the twenty-first century
2) that the school community would function as an effective and responsible member of both a local and global community
3) that the school community would value, participate in and nurture continuous learning as a lifelong commitment, to keep pace with the changing skills and knowledge requirements of a society, and to continue to compete successfully in a global, social, and economic community.

To that end, the committee identified three areas that would strengthen the school's learning environment to offset rural isolation, encourage lifelong learning, and prepare students to enter the workforce and the global community:

1) revise the curriculum and raise student performance standards by eliminating tracking, establish a rigorous core curriculum, focus on critical thinking and problem solving skills, and delineate minimum graduation standards based on performance proficiency
2) increase the standards for teacher performance by exploring alternative teaching models, peer observation, reorganization of traditional subject areas, and training in group process and problem-solving as well as developing a new evaluation system which includes student performance as a measure of teacher effectiveness
3) increase the involvement of parents and community in students' education by encouraging and expecting parents to be partners in their children's education through their support, through contracts, and even by providing teaching expertise.

The grant is a process grant. Curricula in all areas have already been completed by the faculty. It is now a matter of reevaluating those curricula to meet the new foci of the grant and to determine the best ways to achieve the grant's goals. The committee will solicit the aid of students, community members, faculty and staff to determine the best way to achieve our goals.

Implementing the Challenge Grant Goals

At the first K-12 faculty meeting called to announce and celebrate the award there was a mixture of pride and anxiety: pride in our

selection, but anxiety in what our selection really meant. As we toasted our success, we began to realize with some trepidation that restructuring was indeed going to take place in our school. Even now, most of the implications of restructuring for Cabot School are undefined. But we have begun to perceive the potential and know that we will never be the same.

Each faculty meeting in the Spring of 1990 dealt with restructuring themes. Brainstorming techniques were used to identify questions and related topics. After developing a list of more than thirty items, the faculty divided into three work groups based on the three elements of the Challenge Grant.

One of the major tasks was dealing with the class schedule limitations. The faculty looked at several models and experiments. We decided to modify Joseph Carroll's Copernican Plan and experiment with a Fall schedule featuring double blocks for many classes which would meet on a six day rotation. The faculty work team took an inservice day to work on the schedule. Faculty who desired to try the double blocks for their classes indicated their time preferences and the committee designed a schedule which is a radical departure from schedules of the past. More than twenty courses will be offered in double blocks (80 minutes), some meeting each day, most meeting every other day.

Other curriculum innovations have occurred as a result of this schedule change. A new course for ninth graders entitled "Roots: Tracing Our Human Origins" has been developed by four teachers who will team teach this humanities approach to civilization. English, Social Studies, Art, and Music will constitute this first truly team-taught high school course. The Challenge Grant provided funding for materials and a stipend for three inservice days during the summer. Other groups are meeting during the summer to develop curriculum components.

Additional spin-offs of this new approach are Cabot's volunteer involvement in the state Writing and Mathematics Assessment pilot program, student exchanges with Boston Latin School and a more extensive exchange with a school in Leningrad through Project Harmony, heterogeneous grouping in English and Social Studies, an interdisciplinary unit on China in the Primary Unit (K-3), and an innovative science exchange utilizing the laboratory at a local business resource, the Cabot Creamery. And this is only the beginning!

One work group was charged with developing a program for ten inservice days during the school year (five at the very beginning of school) that would address the most pressing questions identi-

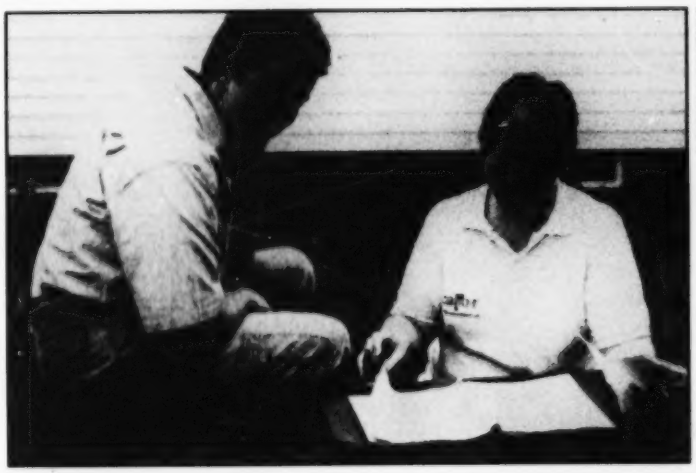

PHOTO BY ELAINE METCALF

Helen Morrison and Marge des Groseilliers review Cabot School's plan to reinvent itself for very high performance.

fied by the faculty. The group took the original list of thirty concepts and consolidated them into eight strands. Faculty members were then asked to rank the strands. We invited members of St. Michael's Graduate Education Programs to help us develop an inservice curriculum that addressed our prioritized needs:

- new techniques for teaching heterogeneous, multi-aged and cooperative groups
- teaming skills
- teachers as coaches
- writing across the curriculum

St. Michael's will provide instructor/facilitators for these sessions and each teacher will earn up to four graduate credits for completion of the year's inservice. The Challenge Grant and district course reimbursement will be used to defray expenses. This collaborative approach seems to offer considerable promise for a partnership between secondary and higher education. We'll see!

The parent-involvement work team is meeting this summer to build upon Cabot's P.A.L.S. organization, which encourages parent involvement in the teaching of elementary science. A community rally is planned for September, in which parents will be informed and challenged regarding the restructuring process. This community meeting will give parents an overview of the grant, its vision and goals. Presentations on the work force needs of the business community in the 1990's by chief executive officers of National Life, the Cabot Creamery, and the state personnel director will be followed by small discussion groups organized into grade levels. Community members will help us brainstorm how parents can become involved in school life, and what they perceive the needs of Cabot students will be ten years from now. Further meetings will address specific methods to meet those needs.

Other restructuring activities at Cabot include plans for a Cabot School Report Card Day in February 1991. A Student Advisory Committee has been meeting with the Principal since April 1990 to discuss the students' role in restructuring. Four teachers attended the Governor's Institutes as Lead Learners, a very beneficial experience. The grantwriting committee continues to meet and oversee the entire process. Members of this committee are present at each School Board meeting to give voice to the restructuring process. A Fitness Trail may even emerge as the result of joint school and community efforts.

We now have earnestly begun this exciting adventure. We are sure of our destination: higher performance for all Cabot students. We are uncertain what may lurk along the way, but we are committed to "following through" on the initiatives we've set for ourselves.

Marge des Groseilliers
Carlene Bellamy
Helen Morrison
David Book

Restructuring special services at Cabot School

In the spirit of "restructuring," the Special Services staff at Cabot School has recently taken stock of teaching/ learning relationships and structures, and has arrived at a plan which they believe is in the best interest of every student. The thrust of their plan considers both the concept of mainstreaming and the staff's concern for the whole child and begins to address the question: How can special services interface meaningfully with regular education in order to cultivate graduates who are caring, healthy, autonomous thinkers and responsible citizens?

Until recently, the Regular, Special, and Compensatory educators at Cabot School have operated individualistically in separate programs, which often caused "disconnectedness" even in our most earnest endeavors to create optimal learning opportunities for students. The division of our jobs has been disconcerting to what should obviously be a joint venture of shared responsibility for the performance of our students.

We spent many hours during the 1989-90 school year considering all aspects of our program, services, and situation in light of our capacity to increase the quality of special needs students within the mainstream system. We read many articles and reports, attended faculty meetings and inservice days on restructuring, and used professional leave time to conduct our own "Restructuring Special Services" workshops. Our conferences focused on topics such as scheduling alternatives, service delivery models, team teaching, identification and intervention processes, individualizing programs, heterogeneous groupings, space options, and job responsibilities – all with an eye on the benefits of changing our prior arrangement, procedure and practice. We examined the contributions we were making toward student development, discovered basic limitations in our present roles, and initiated a dialogue about how we might be able to remodel and improve our special service programs.

Integrating Services, Emphasizing Collaboration

Through our discussions, we became committed to the coordination of Special, Compensatory and Regular Education programs. The plan which emerged supports the theme of decreasing educational fragmentation by establishing links between special services and the rest of the school.

The steps we have taken alter both the physical location and the teaching practice of special services, taking us from a position outside the classroom toward inclusion in the regular program. We have proposed to maximize service delivery by utilizing a variety of team teaching models and by abandoning our old patterns of scheduling in order to coincide with, rather than oppose, classroom schedules. By teaching within the mainstream setting, we hope to be better able to tailor instruction for our target students and to stay in touch with the learning styles, strengths, weaknesses, and social development demonstrated by their peers. We expect that "being there" will open lines of communication with classroom teachers, promote the occurrence of cooperative learning, and enable special services to intervene earlier with other students who may be experiencing difficulties.

We have planned to develop a new "Learning Center," in place of separate "Chapter One" and "Resource" rooms.

To support these ideas we have planned to develop a new "Learning Center," in place of separate "Chapter One" and "Resource" rooms. The Learning Center will be used for small group instruction and for work on special projects by all students and teachers. The Speech and Language Pathologist, Special Educator, and Chapter One Teacher, will be referred to as the "Learning

Team." The team will work with classroom teachers to provide remedial and specialized instruction as well as support for teaching groups of students with diverse needs and wide-ranging abilities.

Teamwork within the Special Services staff, as well as with classroom teachers will address the issue of fragmentation, and by acting collectively, the Special Services faculty expects to become a more valuable asset to the entire K-12 educative process at Cabot.

In the past, we spent much of our energy on isolated coordination efforts. Each of us attempted to pull together our own programs independently. Scheduling conferences among ourselves or with teaching faculty, guidance counselors, and administrators (not to mention parents, community resources, and outside agencies) was a time consuming task, and at times, virtually impossible. In addition to that tedious job, it was equally as difficult to orchestrate the overlap in our duties, for example, in involving parents.

The Learning Team teachers at Cabot share a unique perspective as teachers across the grade levels and content areas

As recently as last year, the Special Educator carried a caseload which spanned the grade levels from K-12, and the Chapter One Teacher worked with K-9.

We conjectured that by reorganizing our positions, we could become more accessible to both special needs and the general population of the school. Therefore, we have shifted the responsibilities of those two roles from managing single programs at all grade levels, to combined positions. Each person will codirect both the Special Education and Chapter One programs, and the caseloads will be assigned by grade levels (K-3, 4-6, 7-8, and 9-12) instead of by programs.

The benefits of the reorganization are that special meetings to coordinate the Special Education and Chapter One programs at each grade level will be eliminated, and the number of meetings required of classroom teachers will reduced by half. A concentration in fewer grades will enable each Learning Team staff member to improve skills and expertise at specific developmental levels, and to draw upon the skills and knowledge of others by team teaching. The reorganization also increases the amount of time we will be able to spend in the classroom.

We plan to meet with our teacher teams in regularly scheduled planning times during the school day throughout the year. The Cabot School master schedule has been reinvented for flexible scheduling on a six-day rotation to facilitate the team structure. As a result, the Learning Team will be able to take advantage of increased blocks of teaching time; longer class periods will allow more productive sessions with students and better continuity from lesson to lesson.

Teaming with the classroom teachers will allow more time for and enhance the quality of consultation with them. As a result, special and regular educators can develop a closer partnership. To support the school's interest in increasing the collaborative roles of all staff for the benefit of all students, Cabot has also revamped its Instructional Support System to give staff weekly opportunities to address concerns about students, create solutions, develop strategies, and to act on our ideas promptly.

Finally, the Learning Team will be experimenting with heterogeneous groups of students and with performance-based assessments through a media technology project. As an extension of the Media Center in the Cabot School Library, we plan to work with students of all abilities on both video and radio projects, supplementing the curricular area competencies and helping students develop communication and performance skills. Students will gain hands-on experience in producing news broadcasts for community viewing and listening, and they will at the same time, be providing a community service by facilitating the flow of information about Cabot School life into the community.

The Learning Team Perspective

To successfully educate students so that each one emerges as a competent, lifelong learner, school systems need to ensure curricular and social continuity – and authenticity in assessment – throughout all of a student's years. In this respect, the Learning Team teachers at Cabot share a unique perspective as teachers across the grade levels and content areas. We can see the potential for a reinvented special services role expanding into greater participation in future education systems.

The restructuring of Special Services at Cabot acknowledges that through conscientious collaboration with mainstream classroom teachers in regular programs, the services we deliver will have a more effective impact on our students' achievement. Our plan provides for the development of a common understanding of student needs, strengths, and learning styles by structuring for the sharing of ideas and data about students by the Learning Team, regular classroom teachers, and parents.

The Learning Team at Cabot hopes to support regular, mainstream education by integrating special services in the classroom with classroom teachers. We intend to encourage the full development of all students and to emphasize collaborative learning which celebrates the highly varied capacities of the individuals we serve.

Carlene Bellamy

We intend to encourage the full development of all students and to emphasize collaborative learning.

Colonial New England project

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❁ *As an example of restructuring in classrooms, Jane Sarno and Michael Dwyer have outlined an American Studies unit on Colonial New England. Jane taught English for ten years at Otter Valley before starting an M.A. in American Studies at the University of Minnesota. Upon her return she designed an interdisciplinary course taught in back-to-back periods in collaboration with a Social Studies teacher. Students receive both English and Social Studies credit for the course. Michael taught American Literature and U.S. History for five years at a private academy in Rutland before coming to Otter Valley in 1988 to form a second American Studies team.*

Performance

In small cooperative groups, students will prepare and perform the following:

1. All group and individual work will be included in a student portfolio to be presented for evaluation

2. Students will prepare a videotape of their group's discoveries and then share their video with other classes

3. Plan an evening "Harvest Celebration" with other classes

4. Report on examples of colonial heritage within their communities : architecture, religious establishments, ancestors, artifacts

5. Respond creatively to the following dilemma:

Boston 1690: Mrs. Elizabeth Freake, age 34, mother of seven young children has just lost her husband. Mr. Freake left considerable debt. What is Mrs. Freake to do? What are her options?

Preparation

In preparation for these performances, the teachers will provide practice sessions, resource materials, and materials to develop the following capacities:

1. Ability to identify and create themes common to colonial and contemporary America based on evidence

2. Practice in interpreting and hypothesizing from primary sources such as texts, demographic tables, and examples of early American art.

3. Developing a personal reaction or opinion to the colonial religious climate

4. Comparing the change in roles of women and children between then and now

Project idea for mathematics

The intent of this unit, designed by John Wheeler, is to explore lever arm and force ratios by developing an experiment that can be used to collect data. Students working in cooperative groups will create a comprehensive oral and written report demonstrating the objective of the experiment, the procedure they used to collect data, and a conclusion. The groups will present their reports orally to the rest of the class and will both use, and be assessed by, an oral report assessment form. The unit will give students exercise in Mathematics, English and Science skills.

Student teams are given a meter stick, a fulcrum, two spring scales, and a procedure to follow in gathering data. They are instructed to record their findings, and prepare a written team report giving attention to the criteria for oral reports contained on the assessment form. The exploratory unit takes three to five class periods.

A partial example of the procedure, calculations, and questions follows:

Procedure

a. Place the 40-centimeter mark of the meter stick on the fulcrum and position the fulcrum and meter stick so that the two ends extend off the table or desk. Attach one spring scale at the 0-cm mark (this is the output force). Attach the other spring scale – for the input force – at the 100-cm mark.

b. Hold the top of the output-force scale near the edge of the desk. Pull down on the input-force scale until you have an input force reading of 1500 g. Read the output-force scale reading. Write these values on a sheet of data paper. Repeat this process for input-force readings of 2500 g and 3000 g.

c. Move the fulcrum to the 60-cm mark on the meter stick and repeat part b.

d. Move the fulcrum to the 80-cm mark on the meter stick and repeat part b.

Calculations and Questions

a. Write the ratio of input force to output force for each fulcrum position. Are these ratios for a given fulcrum position equal? Do they form proportions?

b. Are the ratios at the different fulcrum positions of 40 cm, 60 cm and 80 cm equal to each other? Do they form proportions?

An example of the oral report assessment sheet follows. What makes the use of this kind of assessment interesting is that students can use the form to help plan their oral presentation, because they know exactly what evaluators will be looking for, and how their grade will be determined. Another interesting use of the form is to have students actually become evaluators for each other's teams, which promotes listening and observing skills. The classroom teacher then can assess both a student's growth in oral presentation skills, and his or her growth as a thoughtful observer. Scoring rubrics for both uses are included in this example.

Scoring Guide for Oral Presentations

Presenter _____ *Evaluator* _____

• CONTENT (60% of Grade)

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Introduction

1. How good was the introduction in arousing interest in the presentation? 4-Outstanding 3-Good 2-Fair 1-Weak
2. Was the purpose of the presentation made clear? 3-Yes 2-Somewhat 1-No

Comments: Listening and Feedback Skills _____

_____

_____

_____

Body

1. Did the main ideas come through clearly? 3-Yes 2-Somewhat 1-No
2. Were the supporting ideas and illustrations:
   - Interesting? 3-Yes 2-Somewhat 1-No
   - Varied? 3-Yes 2-Somewhat 1-No
   - Directly Related? 3-Yes 2-Somewhat 1-No
3. Was the presentation appropriate for the audience identified by the presenter? 3-Yes 2-Somewhat 1-No

Comments: Listening and Feedback Skills _____

_____

_____

_____

Conclusion

1. Did the conclusion sum up the main ideas and purposes? 3-Yes 2-Somewhat 1-No
2. How effective was the conclusion in encouraging action, belief, understanding? 4-Outstanding 3-Good 2-Fair 1-Weak

Comments: Listening and Feedback Skills _____

_____

_____

_____

General

1. How would you grade the presentation overall? 4-Outstanding 3-Good 2-Fair 1-Weak
2. Were the objectives of the presentation likely to be reached? 3- Yes 2-Probably 1-Unlikely

Comments: Listening and Feedback Skills _____

_____

_____

• PRESENTATION (40% of Grade)

Audio-Visual Aids

1. Were the aids suited to the topic and the audience? 3-Yes 2-Reasonably So 1-No
2. Were the aids visible to everyone and easy to follow? 3-Yes 2-Reasonably So 1-No
3. How effective was the use of these aids? 4-Outstanding 3-Good 2-Fair 1-Weak

Comments: Listening and Feedback Skills _____

_____

Platform Techniques

1. Poise: Was the presenter in control of the situation? 3-Yes 2-Reasonably So 1-No
2. Were posture and movements appropriate? 3-Yes 2-Reasonably So 1-No
3. How effective were gestures? 4-Outstanding 3-Fair 2-Overdone 1-Ineffective
4. How would you characterize audience relationship (eye contact, tone, interaction) 4-Outstanding 3-Good 2-Fair 1-Weak

Comments: Listening and Feedback Skills _____

_____

Vocal Technique

1. Rate the presenter's pitch and quality. 3-Good 1-Too high 1-Too Low 3-Pleasing 1-Nasal 1-Harsh
2. Rate the presenter's speed and intensity. 5-Good 2-Too Fast 1-Too slow 2-Too loud 1-Too soft 1-Monotonous
3. Did the presenter speak clearly and distinctly? 3-Yes 2-Reasonably So 1-No

Comments: Listening and Feedback Skills _____

_____

General

1. How did you feel about the speaker's overall presentation? 4-Outstanding 3-Good 2-Fair 1-Weak

Comments: Listening and Feedback Skills _____

_____

Scoring for Listening and Feedback Skills sections

When scoring a student's ability to use this form for active listening, score as follows:

3 – if the comment suggests ways to improve performance or expresses a constructive reaction to the presentation

2 – if the comment evaluates the presentation with simple but complete descriptive statements

1 – if the comment is constructive, but too brief ("nice job," "I enjoyed it")

0 – no comments, or for unconstructive, brief comments

There are four comments under CONTENT (times 3 = 36 points possible). There are four comments under PRESENTATION (12 points possible). Score 1 for each of the other objective criteria used by the listener to evaluate a presentation (11 times 3 possible points under CONTENT and 12 possible points under PRESENTATION).

Final Grade for Listening and Feedback Skills

A = 84 – 93 B = 74 – 83
C = 65 – 73 D = 56 – 64
F = BELOW 64

Scoring for Oral Presentations

Scores are attached to each criterion chosen. Scores under CONTENT are multiplied times three (108 possible). Scores under PRESENTATION are taken as is (42 possible). No scores are attached to the comment sections.

Final Grade for Oral Presentation

A = 135 – 150 B = 120 – 134
C = 105 – 119 D = 90 – 104
F = BELOW 90

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